



GILA NEWSLETTER

7TH EDITION

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General Meyers Offers His Gratitude



It has become somewhat of a common occurrence seeing VIPs down here in Kosovo. Yet, when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff pays a visit, you know its something special.

That is exactly what happened this past week when General Meyers, the highest ranking officer in the military, stopped by to congratulate and show his gratitude to a few Gila Soldiers. The general gave his personal coin as a token of achievement to 1LT Christopher, 2LT Lavicka, SGT Beare, SPC Wilson, and SPC Benitez for their efforts in the detainment of an unlawfully armed local national. General Meyers was personally interested in their experiences and requested to be taken to the location of the incident. It was at this location that the general gave each of the Gila soldiers his coin.

Military coins have become a symbol of achievement and gratitude offered by various commands and military officials to both soldiers and civilians alike. In earning a coin from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, each soldier is given something grander than a sovereign, rather something to remind them of their actions and the significance of their accomplishments.

Well done gentlemen! First to Cross!

Happy 4th of July!!

Even in the deployed environment of Kosovo, soldiers celebrate the nation's birthday with a strong sense of patriotism. As members of MNB-E, Gila soldiers were treated to a festive celebration, complete with patriotic songs, performances, and (naturally) fireworks.

1SG Thomas, HHC's 1SG, treated a crowd of hundreds of Camp Bondsteel soldiers and civilians to solo performances of the National Anthem, "Proud to be an American", and "America the Beautiful." 1SG Thomas' truly professional performance was one of the highlights of the evening.

Additionally, the Washington Wizards' Dance Team (of the National Basketball Association) entertained the crowd with several dance performances, musical renditions, and even some skits, which produced honest laughs from the large crowd. Truly a tasteful and appreciated performance from this group that traveled so far.

Lastly, at the end of the evening, the crowd was treated to a spectacular display of fireworks in the evening sky above Camp Bondsteel.

Its not like home, but still a welcomed break for soldiers in the Gila Battalion.

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TASK FORCE 9TH ENGINEER (C)



HHC/9E: Headhunters

The Headhunters have continued to provide solid support to a variety of missions. It is amazing to consider the wide range of missions that TF 9E is called upon to complete and to further realize that someone from HHC is involved in every mission. This week's focus is on the Battalion Communications Section led by SFC Suarez who writes the following.

"Since our arrival in Kosovo back in early May, The Battalion Communications section or S6 has been working long hours making sure that Task Force 9th Engineers are communicating in more ways than one. SSG Carroll, SPC Spitz, and SPC Hamilton have been providing flawless network communications. Their efforts ensure that the Battalion's information flow remains reliable and efficient.



PV2 Birnie and PFC Edwards pause for a photo with two Kosovo Albanian boys during a recent Med-cap visit where they are able to provide medical assistance to local civilians

But, it doesn't end there. Every convoy that rolls out the gate also relies upon the communication section's technical expertise. In this unstable part of the world, FM communications back to the base camp is a crucial part of every mission that is conducted and the communication section assists operators to install and troubleshoot vehicle communication systems.



SGT Snell (aka Doc), CPT Hackenberg (aka "the three" or BN S3), and SPC Hall (aka TOC Super Soldier) step outside to enjoy the sunshine

The section not only contributes to the daily accomplishment of Task Force 9th Engineers' mission, but also helps soldiers keep in touch with their loved ones in Schweinfurt, Wuerzburg, Hohenfels, and Fort Belvoir, through bi-weekly video teleconference sessions (VTC). Along with SGT Simons, the rear detachment communications NCOIC, battalion communications has managed to boost the morale of our soldiers by providing them an opportunity to see and speak with their wives and children.

SGT White, our Bravo company communications representative, continues to provide Bravo Company with outstanding communications support. Our team remains complete and able to continue providing superb communications support to the battalion with our newest member, PV2 Jessica Snyder, who comes from Albany in the great state of New York.

This is- 'The Voice of the Gila Monsters' OUT."



SPC Pena, SPC Snow, and SSG Garcia can be almost always be found working hard in the Personnel Administration Center





A/9E: Breach Hell!

Another week gone by, another chance for alpha company to provide excellent support to the task force. A definite highlight of this week was the "PT Olympics" organized by 3rd Platoon. In the company, platoons broke up into various six-man teams that competed in several events for overall bragging rights. The events consisted of a sandbag relay, a run on all-fours, a team stretch, sit-us, push-ups, team log sit-ups, and a team log-press. The theme was the original Olympics, so teams came wearing togas and laurels (which earned them extra points). Everyone had a great time, and expects to do it all over again in a few short months.

This week, 1st platoon completed a few more training events and began the guard rotation. On Friday, PFC Pollard, PFC Jefferson, PV2 Martin, CPL Brown, PFC Rogers and SPC Palacios practiced Cordon and Search, a technique to search buildings, by simulating a floor plan with engineer tape on the ground. On Saturday, the company conducted a PT Olympics and first platoon finished first placed in the company. There were two teams that participated for first platoon. Team one – SPC Palacios, PFC Pollard, SPC Seawright, SPC Oliver, PFC Walz, and PFC Jefferson. Team five – SSG Labrador, SGT Battle, SGT McSwain, CPL Brown, PFC Rogers, and PV2 Martin. Team five won most of the events, flexibility, all-fours run, sand bag relay, and log presses, and the push-up competition. First platoon then began Force Protection duty, ensuring Camp Bondsteel remains safe and secure.

The Dirty Deuce's week was as busy as ever, with the highlight being the Company's Olympics organized by 3rd Platoon. Our platoon had a strong showing with a team consisting of the PL, PSG, SLs and PV2 Wuenn. Stiff competition from the other platoons didn't stop the team from taking 1st place overall in the competition. This week, PFC Bradley also competed in the TF 9E Soldier of the Quarter Board. PFC Bradley narrowly missed winning, placing 2nd overall. PFC Bradley asserted that he was determined to return to the board and win next time.



1st Platoon Cordon and Search training

The sappers of 3rd Platoon send their best wishes for the holiday. A holiday made that much more special by recent events and the current Kosovo Deployment. The Olympics organized by SFC Villa proved to be an outstanding success and the soldiers of A Company greatly appreciated the change from the, sometimes, monotonous physical training. Once again, this past Monday found the platoon providing top-notch force protection to CBS. The sector remains relatively quiet but our team continues to stay alert to the surroundings and frequently executes valuable training in order to keep engineer skills sharp. As friends, husbands, sons and brothers- we are all missing friends and family in Germany and the States; thankfully, we take comfort in knowing that we are in your thoughts today. All the Best!

Rest assured that the sappers in Alpha Company remain vigilant on the frontier of freedom. We hope you all had a very pleasant Independence Day, which takes on special meaning for those who have loved ones deployed. As always, Sappers...Breach Hell!



(left to rear) SPC Boyer, SPC Robinson, J., SPC Doran, SSG Brokmeier and SPC Cameron support SPC Culshaw during roll call at the A Company Olympics on June 29th





B/9E: Outlaws

Dear Outlaw Families,

I have had quite a few requests for pictures of the city and SPC Clay and 1LT Johnson gave me the opportunity to send you some. SPC Clay decided to reenlist on top of the grain silo, which is in the heart of the city of Gnjilane. The silo is the tallest building in the town, 358 steps high. From the top of the silo is an incredible view of Outlaw Land. We own all the ground within the view of the pictures and then some. As you can see the city is a great mixture of different views. One section of the town looks similar to a United States college town. There are other sections with multistory apartment buildings, and there are many large multi-family homes. Some of the homes are complete, but others are just shells of homes. They like to build buildings, in order to claim land and then they quit working on them. In one of the photos, you can see the local swimming pool. We are currently not allowed to swim, but there is a possibility that we may get to swim in the near future. The guys patrol the city 18 hours a day, which amounts to quite a bit of walking. Our most current project is to map out all the businesses in the town and to take pictures of the owners. This is a monumental task, but we are making good progress. The odd thing about this city is that the street names have changed numerous times in the past few years. Most of the people have no idea what their address is; many just spray paint their names on their houses to tell everyone who lives there. They basically all have to pick up their mail at the post office. At times Outlaw Land seems like the Twilight Zone, but we call it home.

God Bless,
CPT Bill Lash



1LT Johnson reenlists SPC Clay

Pictures of Gnjilane





C/9E: Dawgs of War

The Dawgs of War successfully transitioned out of force protection guard and escort requirements to assume Quick Reaction Force duties and fulfill some important engineering reconnaissance and route upgrades for Multi-National Brigade (East).

Together with a captain from Task Force 1-26 Infantry and SGT Beare from the Battalion's Engineer Reconnaissance Team, 1LT Christopher and 2LT Lavicka detained an armed guerilla near the border with the FYROM. The detained person provided much intelligence that will help us maintain the peace in the long run much better.

Each of the platoons conducted reconnaissance on two roads for potential future use and identified and conducted mine-sweeping operations on ground that will serve as helicopter landing zones and parachute drop zones. They also identified trails to critical areas and sections of road that needed repair or upgrading. A section from Alpha Company, Ninety-fourth Engineers provided construction equipment to help upgrade a tractor path in the mountains into a usable road for future operations.

The Fourth of July saw the company competing in a multi-sport tournament. Captain Clark and 1LT Parranto escorted cadets from the French Military Academy in St. Cyr, France for the evening entertainment portion.

The Dining Facility went out of its way to make the soldiers feel at home with the food selection, which was much appreciated by our soldiers. We hope this letter finds you all in the best of health and enjoying this beautiful summer!

Dawg 6



Dawg Volleyball challenges COL Hoffpair's Personal Security Detachment



Dawg basketball finds a tough opponent



SPC Price runs hard after hitting a home-run





A/94E: Warriors

Soldiers of A Co 94th ECB(H) are developing and learning more each day.

The 4th of July celebration was definitely a good one for the Warriors. A/94th soldiers were victorious in every sport they played on the 4th. Camp Bondsteel dwellers felt the rath despite the festivities. The basketball team cancelled out the 121st SIG BN. Our championship volleyball team punished 1/7 FA with 25-12 and 25-11 victories. The softball team silenced the 630th MPs with the 19-9 win in the third inning. The A/94th, HHC/9E and TMK combination soccer team proved beneficial with their 4-0 win over HHD/709th MP. Although July 4th proved to be an excellent day for competition, this is only the first of four rounds. The road definitely gets tougher as we progress.

Route Lion remains a huge part of the Horizontal section's life. SSG Daisy continues to prove himself as an excellent construction supervisor and Non-commissioned Officer. He remains ahead of schedule according to original estimates. He also ensures that younger, less experienced equipment operators are trained and developed. SSG Daisy and his squad deployed here from Hohenfels with construction foremost on their minds. The level of care, interest, and development is second to none.

SSG Kenny and his squad work in conjunction with C/9E on a road upgrade that is vital to the freedom of movement for KFOR vehicles. SSG Kenny and his squad are well ahead of schedule and will be completed in days rather than the originally estimated weeks. The Bulldozer and Grader operation comes easy to SSG Kenny's well-trained squad.



SSG Daisy and his squad balance working with the TMK and the local populous

SPC Gonzales, the company Commo Chief, has once again proven himself an asset to the unit. On short notice, he developed, prepared and presented a class on the notorious OE-254 antenna. The purpose of the class was to ensure all soldiers could set up and break the antenna down to standard. A/94th will conduct an M249 range for the Battalion where this specific task will prove critical.

The upcoming M249 range is the source of much anticipation. This will be the first range that we conduct for the Battalion and here in the Balkans. The Leaders and soldiers of the unit are going the extra mile to ensure the range is flawless. SSG Davis, the Construction Platoon Sergeant has conducted recons and developed an excellent plan. SGT Depina will be the master of ceremonies conducting Primary Marksmanship Instruction. The armorer qualified SGT Depina is the A/94th M249 guru and will share his knowledge and tricks of the trade with all attendees.

We also had one of the mighty Alpha Warriors reenlist this week. BG Lute, MNB East Commander reenlisted SGT Addley Saimbert on 29 June 2002. The ceremony was conducted in BG Lute's office with all available NCOs present. In closing, General Lute concluded that SGT Saimbert should invite him to his promotion ceremony; if not to pin the new rank on, then just to be present.



BG Lute reenlists SGT Saimbert





737th EOD

Aftershock 737 continues to conduct all missions assigned providing excellent support to the entire MNB (E) sector. 737th conducted demolition operations this week, disposing of 1800 pounds of propellant. 737th is continuing its partnership with other EOD units from other countries. We are preparing to conduct training with the British, Germans, Danish and French. This EOD exchange program is a great way for all EOD technicians to learn about new techniques in approaching an unexploded bomb.

CPT Green



*RONS (Robot operating neutralization system)
One of the many pieces of equipment foreign EOD units like to
manipulate during exchanges*



SPC White preparing propellant demolition shot



Scenes from KFOR 4A



1st platoon received the first placed award during the A CO PT Olympics



Gila Soldiers with General Meyers



Members of the Gila Staff meet with a representative of the Royal Engineers of Britain

Editor in Chief
The Gila Adjutant

TASK FORCE 9TH ENGINEER (C)

